THE VVomans Champion; OR The Strange Wonder

BEING

A true Relation of the mad Pranks,

merry Conceits, Politick Figaries, and moſt unheard of Stratagems of Mrs. *Mary Frith*, commonly called *Mall* Cutpurſe, living near *Fleet-Conduit*; even from her Cradle to her Winding-Sheet.

Containing ſeveral remarkable paſſages touching the Conſtable, Counters; and Priſoners, and her laſt Will and Teſtament to Squire *DUN*, as a Legacy for his latter days.

With her divining Propheſie, concerning wicked Plots, and Hell-bred Conſpiracies.

Extracted from the Original; Publiſhed according to Order.

LONDON, Printed for *G. Horton*, living in *Fig-Tree* Court in *Barbican*, 1662.

To the Reader.

Ingenious Reader,

HAveing Collected ſome Papers, contayning the merry frolicks and unparallel'd deſignes, and ſtratagems of the Female Humouriſt, or rather the Prodigie of thoſe times ſhe liv'd in being the living Deſcription and Portraiture of a Schiſm and Separation; her Doublet and Petticoat, underſtanding one another no better then an Amſterdam Jew, or a Coleman-ſtreet Separate; I ſhall in this following Tract, preſent thee with ſundry merry Pranks, pleaſant to many, hurtful to none, but very delightful to the Loyal and Ingennous; as will evidently appear by the following ſubject.

The Womens Champion, &c.

THis great *Ambodexter*, *Mall Cut-purſs*, (for ſo ſhe was called in her life time) was born in the year, 1589 in the Pariſh of Sr. *Giles's* Cripplegate, near *Barbican*, her Father a Shooe-maker, frow whom deſcended a notable crafty *Caſſandra*, a very Tomrig or Rumpſcuttle ſhe was in her infancy, and delighted and ſported only in Boys play

and paſtime, not minding or company-ing with the Girls; ſhe was very rudely inclined, and could not indure the ſedentary life of ſewing or ſticking; a Sampler was as grievous as a winding-ſheet; her Needle, Bodkin, and Thimble, ſhe could not think on quietly, wiſhing them charged into Sword and Dagger for a bout at Cudgels: for any ſuch exerciſe, who but ſhe!

Nay more, for the Boys Play, who but Ranting Moll; a Tomrig in grain; to fight with them was her hearts delight; and for running or jumping, leaping or hoping; who but ſhe? her uſual phraſe, being, *Hey for them* (kicking up her right leg) *that can play any part, a merry World, I warrant you Boyes a true heart is worth Gold*; *Bloomſbury* and *Turnmil-ſtreet*, are places of pleaſure; hang ſorrow and care, *the longeſt liver take all.*

A ſad ſoul Godwot, and her Rudiments as bad, that in young years ſhe ſhould be ſo far injured, as to imbrace ſuch *aſſandria* practiſes, that being too great a Libertine, ſhe lived too much in common, to be incloſed in the limbs of a private domeſtique life. Civility ſhe counted a Bond-ſlave; and a Quarter-ſtaff was fitter to her hand then a Diſtaff; for when ſhe was about 14 years of age, the Bear-Garden ſhe frequented, going in a ſtrange attire, her Hat buttened up, with a Swans Feather in it, died of ſeveral Colours, and a luſty ſtout Dog at her heels, which ſhe called *Trouncer*; or, *Have at all*; This Dog gaind her many a brave prize; and who but little *Moll* amongſt the *Beau-heards*; for ſlave and toyl, inſtead of *ſpinning* and *reeling* was her delight tell her of Houſewiveing, *Piſh, let us live by our Wits* replyed ſhe, *I was never born under a Buſhel*; the world was made for money; and ſhall not I have my ſhare come, a fig for the Bake-houſe, my Mothers bread will prove Dough, Chriſtmas will come, and then have at the mincing Dames.

Thus, after ſome progreſs in her licentious waies, ſhe initiated her ſelf into a private crew of ſome looſe women, who promiſed great things to manage the dexterity of her wit, to ſome notable advantage; their Trade being to receive goods which were lifted, that is to ſay, ſtollen by theeves, and ſo in a fair (or foul) way, ſell them again; in which enterprize *Moll* was to play faſt and looſe; pretending ſhe knew the theeves, and would help

them

them to their goods; but these youngsters were too subtle; for upon discovery, most of them ran away, only five were hanged at *Tyburn*, a place meriting their desert; so that it was high time for *Mary* to decline that dangerous Road: Yet being thus seasoned, she was fit for any employment, yet escaped from being spirited for *New-England*, notwithstanding her being carried aboard the Ship to drink Strong-waters, and afterwards put under deck; which she perceiving, cryed out, A Plot, a Plot, Gun-powder, Gun-powder; so that the Boatswain, or Purser, and many others, immediately ran down, saying, Where is it, where is it? Here, here, cry'd *Moll*; but during their diligent search, she made her escape by the help of some friends, and padded it along upon the Trentish Coast to *London*; where shee proved old excellent amongst the Land-Pyrates, and who but *Moll* amongst the *Whipsters*? yet fore-seeing the danger, was loath to relinquish the profit, every snip and shire she got, being as accessary to the theft, as the very Bulkers themselves, being like green fruit, sowre and sweet, never digesting of it, but with a conceited soar throat; till at last she resolved to run no longer the desperate hazard of those courses, which many of her Comrades monthly expiated with their lives: So that (all things being considered) she set up a kinde of Brokery, or a distinct factory for Jewels, Rings, and Watches (in her house neer *Fleet-Conduit*) which had been pinched or stolen any manner of way; and this was called, forsooth, the *Insurance Office*, for such Merchandize, the losers being sure, upon compassion, to recover their goods again, the Pirates good ransome, and *Molls* good Brokage, without any more danger, the *Hue and-Cry* being alwaies directed to her; for indeed, 'tis well known, she would have her humour; in one of which, coming home through *Ludgate*, with a Lanthorn carried before her, a Shoo-maker, being then Constable, translated her to a Rat, and sent her to the Counter; giving command, that she should be put into the hole; (a fit place indeed, for such Vermine) in which Round-house, or Epitome of the world, the first salute in the morning was, *Garnish*, that amounted to half a Crown, which *Moll* stoutly refused to pay; but the Constable of the Hole, seconding his demand with

an imperious look, which is the ſad prognoſtick of a ſtripping, laid hold of her cloaths, but ſtartled at the new guiſe of a doublet and petticoat; and asking who ſhe was, I am, quoth *Moll*, bouncing Mris. *Frith*, that never turned my back to any man; with that he ſmiled; Ay, doſt thou foreſtow mee, ſaid ſhe, the prayers of the Collegians, attend your motion, which proved ſucceſsful; for the next morning being ſet at liberty, ſhe put a trick upon the Conſtable; having learnt his name, and the County from whence he came, and imployed a meſſenger, in all haſte, to certifie him, that his Uncle was dead in ſuch a place, and that hee had inventoried all the goods, and lockt up all his Evidences and Bonds, and the Mony and Plate in one of the great Cheſts, and had brought the Key along with him, as a tender of his ſervice; which being accepted of, not many hours after, he betook his journeys for poſſeſſion, *Molls* Imp waiting upon him; and coming within ten miles of the place, where they lodged that night, early the next morning, this youngſter gets up, ſaddles his horſe, with the Portmanteau and Mony, and away gallops another Road, leaving his new Maſter to finde out the *Vtopia* of his great wind-fall; who ariſing, and miſſing his Guide, ſuſpected it to be a cheat; and true it is, it proved no otherwiſe; for at his return, (the ſtory being known) never was a Crafts-man ſo flouted and jeered; *but time and ſhame wear out all things.*

And true it is, the longeſt day muſt have an end, and ſo had *Moll*; though the chief remainder of her life was not to be paralleld; for from the firſt entrance into a competency of age, ſhe had her frollicks, wearing Doublets and Petticoats, and to her dying day, ſhe would not leave it off, till the infirmity and weakneſs of nature, had brought her a bed to her laſt travel, changed her Doublet for a Waſt-coat, and her Petty-coats for a Winding-ſheet; which being no amiable, or obliging Veſts, I ſhall no further anatomize her, than in theſe words, which may very pertinently characterize her; to wit, I that have rid prancing through the City of *London*, like a Chevalier in Cap-a-pee, with a Trumpeter before mee which in thoſe daies (being as rare as a Swallow in Summer) was at laſt abhorred, and by ſome, accounted

counted to be a Prodigie; for what was generative in my belly by the excess of Wine, came destructive in my belly, for that the Tympanied skin thereof, sounded like a Conduit door. So that it cannot be expected I should have made a Will; because I had persevered so long before in it, to no better purpose; and that if I had had my desert, I should have had an Executioner, in lead of an Executor; 'tis very well I part so fairly, but remember me to Squire *Dun*, and tell him he will not need my Register. For my Dianing spirit tells me, there's a Glut cumming, which will make him happy, and rich, if he knows how to use it; and as in my lifetime I have been prepostrous; so at my death I expect no Funeral Commendation, but two or three dust-laid words by way of Epitaph.

HER EPITAPH.

HEre lies under this same Marble,
Dust, for times last Sive to Garble;
Dust, to perplex a *Sadducee*,
Whither it rise a He or She,
Or two in one, a single pair,
Natures sport and now her care;
For how she'l cloath it at last day,
(Unless she *Sigh* it all away)
Or where she'l place it, none can tell,
Some middle place 'twixt *Heaven* and *Hell*;
And well 'tis Purgatory's found,
Ele she must Hide her under ground.
These reliques do deserve the Doom,
That Cheat of *Mahomets* fine Tomb:
For no Communion she had,
Nor forced with the good or bad;
That when the world shall be calcin'd
And the mixt Masse of humane kind
Shall separate by that melting Fire,
She'l stand alone and none come nigh her:
Reader, here she lies till then,
When (to say all) you'l see her agen.

An Acrostick.

M erry I liv'd and many pranks I plaid,
A nd without sorrow now in Grave am laid,
R est, and the Sleep of Death doth now Sure ease
Y ouths active Sins, and their Old age'd increase.

F amous I was for all the Thieving Art,
R enown'd for what Old Women ride in Cart;
I n Pocket and in Placket I had part;
T his Life I Lived in a Mans Disguise,
H e best laments me that with Laughter Cries.

FINIS.